

U.S. Pat. Appl. No. 09/743,164

Attorney Docket No. 177266 (8830-116)

*Listing and Amendments to the Claims:*

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

32. (Currently amended) A method for automatically determining the progress of a process, said process being one based upon the use of a plasma which exhibits a changing spectral characteristic as the process progresses, said spectral characteristic being selected from the group consisting of absorption and radiation; the method comprising:

continuously monitoring at least part of said spectral characteristic to provide a spectral signal, and

electronically applying shape recognition techniques to the shape of said signal[.] .

[said comparing being effected by applying shape recognition techniques to the shape of said signal.]